



FORMAT

Summer 2020

Issue 73

(The Official Newsletter of the Federation of Retired Members' Associations of the NASUWT)
Distributed to thousands of retired members in the UK, Channel Islands and Europe.

A message from the FRMA President



I hope that I find you and those you hold dear safe and well as you continue to cope with the ups and downs of daily life in these most difficult of times.

Speaking of the restrictions suddenly introduced in mid-

March, the then Acting General Secretary, Chris Keates, wrote: *'we are sure you will understand that these are extraordinary times and no one could have foreseen the need for such radical changes to our arrangements.'* As you know, the initial impact on our Association was the cancellation of our 2020 AGM followed by the cessation of all RMA events and face-to-face meetings.

As the 2020 election process had been correctly concluded, our Officers were able to take up their posts. The Executive decided to use the published calendar of meetings for 2020-21 as a framework for its business which would focus upon maintaining our structures and, most importantly, planning for a resumption of the new normal service. We became part of the population working from home and made use of the so-called 'luxury' of free time to discuss matters of moment, consider other issues in depth and keep a record of items to be presented in the traditional way at a later date.

The following extract from a letter received from Chris Keates and Dr Patrick Roach, the new General Secretary, illustrates the great support and practical advice we continue to receive from colleagues in the NASUWT: *"we are sure that the networks the*

FRMA has built up will be a comfort and vitally important contact at this time." In this regard, it has been a great pleasure for me to receive electronic copies of RMA newsletters providing information on sources of creative ideas, recording past enjoyable outings and looking forward to get-togethers in better days which surely must come.

We are, of course, very aware of the pressure and challenges facing our younger working colleagues and are appreciative of the increased workload these have generated for Union staff and officers. If you know of an RMA colleague or teacher who is currently facing particularly difficult financial circumstances, please make them aware of the support available from the NASUWT Central Benevolent Fund.

I am writing on the first weekend of May and the airways, etc. are buzzing with rumours and suggestions of what might be included in the Prime Minister's soon-to-be announced plan for gradually reducing the lockdown restrictions. Our age group is receiving particular attention so maybe, just maybe, we will soon be in a position to engage in more positive beneficial activities.

It certainly would be particularly welcome if we were able to get together to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the FRMA which took place in 1995, under the presidency of Len Cooper. We intend to mark this significant milestone during the series of FRMA meetings at Rednal in September, if we are no longer subject to lockdown. May I encourage anyone who may have mementoes of the early days or related to special events over the years to send them to the Editor for inclusion in future editions of **FORMAT**.

David Mehaffey, FRMA President

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Editorial

Given the unusual events which have happened recently, and continue to affect us all, this issue is dedicated to all our members, wherever they are, hoping they are keeping well, safe and active.

Please keep in touch with each other and send in any articles you think appropriate, and any letters, to your Editor Bill Matthew at bill.matthew2@btinternet.com or by post to Bill Matthew, 15 Seymour Street, Dundee DD2 1HD.

Contact Details

Officers are:

President: Dave Mehaffey; *Vice-President:* John Rimmer; *Secretary:* Deanna Selby; *Treasurer:* Bill Matthew; and *Development:* Roger Darke.

Further details can be obtained from the NASUWT Website.

(See abbreviated article below and Issue 72.)

NASUWT Website

Go to the NASUWT home site at: www.nasuwt.org.uk.

Once logged in scroll down to the bottom section under 'Useful links' and click on 'I am a retired teacher'. This takes you to the retired teachers' section where more specific information can be found. On the right-hand side of this page you should see under 'in this section' a number of headings such as 'Format retired members magazine' and details of FRMA Officers and REMs which you can click on. **FORMAT** Magazine supplementary articles will be on this webpage.

Not the Last Exit?

You may have noted from the Spring edition of **FORMAT** that you have a new FRMA Development Officer responsible for membership and RMA issues. Nothing sinister involved: after being in post for more than ten years, I felt that it was time to hand the role over to some fresh (and hopefully recently much-washed!) hands. Also, my main ambition was to oversee the foundation of Shropshire RMA, the county where I spent all my teaching career, so that particular ambition had been achieved several years ago: happily, they are now one of the most active small RMAs.

The FRMA and NASUWT will not have lost my services entirely: I am still Cumbria RMA Treasurer, and will doubtless represent our RMA at Rednal General Meetings more often than not. There is also something known as the FRMA President's Advisory Committee, of which I shall continue to be one of its three members, but no longer Chairman.

So, how did all this begin? I effectively retired from being Head of History at the Marches School, Oswestry in 2000, in order to fulfil my main lifetime ambition of moving to the Lake District. Not wanting to lose ties with the NASUWT and trade unionism, I asked the headquarters at Rednal if there was a reduced subscription rate for retired members. There was, although not much publicised! So, I forked out my £14.20 per year. Shortly after this, a letter arrived from a certain Chris Keates pointing out that there are these things called RMAs and at that point Cumbria had not got one, and would I be interested in helping start one up? Possibly stupidly, I answered "Yes". The rest, as they say, is History.

At the Cumbria RMA foundation meeting held at Coniston on July 2001, Dick Chalmers turned up; actually, living in the Yorkshire Dales with a Lancaster postcode, he had put 'Cumbria is closest to me' in his retirement letter to Rednal. Also attending was Harold Lingard, by then in his 80s but who was chuffed (Cumbrian dialect) to be there as he had tried to set up a RMA in Cumbria when he retired in the 1980s, but found little interest at that point. (Cumbria is always ahead of its time: check out the History of the Industrial Revolution – and the current COVID-19 pandemic!) So, the first three Cumbria RMA Officers were Tom, Dick and Harry.

I am leaving my post with the FRMA and our RMAs in good health overall. Membership is currently at its highest-ever total, and continues to grow year on year, but perhaps more needs to be done to encourage more NASUWT members to stay on as retired members. The major problem, however, is that a few of our longer-established RMAs have recently found it difficult to replace committee members who need to hand over their responsibility to younger volunteers.

Some RMAs are operating with the same committee members as they had when founded 15 or 20 years ago. Their officers may have benefited from early retirement then, but you can all do the maths.

So this article is also a request to more recently retired members: volunteer to help run your RMA; it is an important cog in maintaining mental and physical wellbeing in retirement, combats isolation

for retired members living alone, campaigns in your interests, and continues to support the NASUWT's campaigns – never more important than at the present time. Without trade unions, your life would be much worse.

Finally, several 'thank yous' are appropriate:

1. to all present and past FRMA and RMA Officers, especially those of the latter who have helped found their RMAs in their locality; and especially to Dick Chalmers and Deanna Selby, who are brilliant at mulling over problems on the way to or back home from Rednal;
2. to Roger Darke for volunteering to take over one of the most rewarding responsibilities I have ever taken on. I am sure he will develop the role to a higher plane. (To where no-one has gone before?);

3. to the helpful and professional staff at Rednal, especially in the Membership and Despatch Departments; and
4. and especially to our Regional Executive Members (REMs) past and present. Without the REMs, the role of Development Officer would be impossible: they are the eyes of the FRMA in the regions, crucial to the foundation of new RMAs; and perhaps more importantly, crucial to the continued health of RMAs. REMs know their patch and visit their RMAs regularly. All our six current REMs have been instrumental in preserving at least one of their constituent RMAs during the last four years. All those would have become moribund without the intervention of their REM.

Tom Fraser, Past Development Officer

FRMA Finances

May I take this opportunity to first of all wish you good health and comfort in these difficult times.

The following is not an official report, as would have been the case had we held our AGM. All figures for last year and the proposed budget for this year were circulated earlier, but this is an attempt at suggesting some of the potential effects of events so far and what they might mean going forwards.

Briefly, the end of 2019 saw the reserves increase, mainly due to reduced costs associated with National Conference and the transfer of funds when the London RMA and Bexley and Bromley RMA amalgamated. The budget for 2020 showed a possible minor excess, although provision would have had to be made for certain future costs, mainly for presidential medals. (These cost approximately £250 each to purchase and engrave.)

One Executive meeting took place in January. Some other additional spending has occurred. Some capital expenditure may occur as indicated above regarding medals. We may have a meeting in September, but that is not looking possible at this time.

The cancellation of all other meetings for the present and the near future means that the FRMA will not be spending all that had been budgeted for and is liable to finish the year with an excess of income over expenditure.

Present circumstances are such that all RMAs are liable to find themselves in exactly the same financial position, i.e. of having excesses and adding to their reserves at the end of 2020. The extent of

these excesses will be determined by how long the present situation continues.

The motion to increase the precept of payment from RMAs to FRMA by 50p was agreed and will take place at the start of 2021. I do not envisage any RMA having any difficulties in making this precept payment in 2021 as all RMAs will have comparatively large reserves by that time. This does, however, leave the difficulty of different RMAs having a large variation in the level of their reserves. Some continue to be large and others small. In total, the figure is very large but is distributed unevenly across RMAs. There are many different reasons why this has been the historic case. At some point, all RMAs will have to consider what is a satisfactory level of reserve, whether they wish to redistribute unused reserves, and the criteria and level of any possible redistribution they may wish to see introduced. All this is for future discussions, but members should be giving this matter some thought.

In conclusion, the financial situation is better than it might otherwise be due to this lockdown. I sincerely hope that this slightly better picture will be the same in your individual RMA and for yourself. I am not going to quote the song "Things can only get better", as we know what happened there, but it is true that things will get better and slowly return to normal.

Keep safe. Keep well. Keep active.

Bill Matthew, FRMA Treasurer



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Published letters do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editor or that of the NASUWT Federation of RMAs. **The opinion of writers may include errors of fact.** Letters for publication should be sent to the Editor of **FORMAT**. These should include the name of your RMA (if you have one).

Dear Sir

Regarding the question on page 3 'Did You Know?' in last **FORMAT**. It was about possible part refund of fees for Powers of Attorney. The answer is no, I didn't know. I have now successfully, and very easily online, submitted my claim and one for my wife, and I now hope for a refund in May. Thank you for publishing that information.

Franklyn Bovey, Brimscombe, Stroud

Dear Bill

My eye was caught by the Spring edition of **FORMAT** by the 'Did You Know?' piece. Spurred on by the article, I checked into it and am pleased to say a refund of around £45 was paid back into my mother's bank account. She is delighted to know that she has had some money back from the Government.

Regards

(Gerald) Roy Varney

(Editor's note. *Glad to be of assistance.*)

Dear Sir

I saw something in the latest edition about members that were based abroad. My husband and I were members and taught in Rheindahlen...JHQ, Germany. We now live in Bromsgrove near HQ.

Best wishes

Helen Pryce...and Jon Pryce (Jonathan)

Dear Sir

I recently returned from a Fred Olsen cruise from Bali to Dubai. This lasted one month and took in visits to Bali, Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India.



The ship I was on was 'Boudicca' as shown above.

It would take too long to give a full account of all that occurred but the NASUWT has uploaded a six-page account of this journey, including some photographs, to the Union's website.

Bill Matthew, Scotland RMA

(Editor's note. *I am sure that many members will have similar experiences which, if necessary, could be similarly summarised in **FORMAT** and then uploaded to the site.*)

Notes from the Kent Newsletter

'On hearing ill rumour that Londoners may soon be urged into their lodgings by Her Majesty's men, I looked upon the street to see a gaggle of striplings making fair merry, and no doubt spreading the plague well about. Not a care had these rogues for the health of their elders!' The Diary of Samuel Pepys – London 1664.

So, society's REAL key workers have just been revealed. NOT the bankers, NOT the traders, NOT the elite hedge fund managers. It's the nurses. The doctors. The delivery drivers. The carers. The porters. The teachers. The shelf stackers. The checkout staff. Cleaners. Postmen. Delivery Drivers, and many, many more like them.

"They said a mask and gloves were enough to go to the supermarket.

"They lied.

"Everybody else had clothes on!"

Dipping My Toe into Social Media

Thanks to my grandchildren, I have taken the plunge and started a blog. For a while now I have been pondering over the question of why do we educate people? What is the purpose of education?

There is a lot of discussion in the news and in the media about education. This, however, is usually in terms of examination, performance, the position of Britain on some international scale of achievement, the type of school, school structures and curriculum. But rarely asked is what does schooling mean for pupils and students? In my new blog, I decided to investigate this question. I began by studying the history of Western Education and followed this up by looking at British educational documents from 1816. I have got as far as 1944.

What I have discovered is that there have been two different approaches to education, one for what we can call the ruling class, with a recognised aim of providing leaders of the state and, in earlier times, of the church, which was then much more powerful than it is today. The other approach is that towards those who are ruled, that is the majority of people. With regard to this approach, there has been controversy. There has been a strong feeling that ordinary people should not be educated at all, that this could be damaging to the state, leading to people no longer being satisfied in doing the jobs they were required to undertake.

In spite of this class difference, I did find a common theme between these two approaches. Both for the rulers and the ruled, the main aim of education has been to fit the individuals involved for the role they were to play within the nation, the church or, in more recent times, industry and commerce. As I refined my interest by looking more specifically at the education of the working class, what I found was an increasing recognition that the demands of industry and commerce required a better informed and more knowledgeable workforce. This was only accepted grudgingly by our rulers. It was accepted that the economy needed educated managers, foremen, and workers, but the level of education needed was different. This eventually led to the tripartite system of grammar, technical and modern schools.

What I find missing in all of this is an understanding or acceptance of the value that education can bring to each one of us in developing our own personality, interests and enjoyment of life. That intimate, personal experience of mental development which is as important, if not more so, than physical development. It is only by allowing

people to develop their full capacities that they are able to make their contribution towards the development of society in all its aspects.

It is this failure, or unwillingness, to accept the individual personal needs of children and young people, and the corollary that education is all about fitting pupils and students into a fixed role in society, that is causing so much damage to our young people. It is little wonder that so many young people are suffering from mental illness. In a society that has moved on so rapidly in technological terms, we have failed to move on in terms of economic and social relationships. We are locked into a nineteenth century mentality which saw the industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism as the panacea. In all of this we have lost the sense of human values and of our common humanity. How can a civilised society accept food banks and people sleeping rough as normal aspects of society? It is amongst our young people that these considerations (or lack of consideration) are having a deep effect. They complain bitterly that they are not being listened to. We are too ready to condemn young people without questioning why they react as they do.



The nature of society is set by the rulers of that society. As Karl Marx said, the dominant ideas of a society are the ideas of the dominant class in society. In our modern society, it is the young people, with their school strikes against climate change and with Extinction Rebellion (XR) calling for system change, that are challenging the status quo. We should be listening to young people. We should also be asking why, with our present stage of knowledge and technical progress, education is not fulfilling its function of producing individuals whose minds are attuned to bring them happiness, joy and contentment in a civilised society, which is creative and regenerative and forward looking to a world that replenishes itself, full of hope for an even better future.

Ralph Tebbutt, *London RMA*

Round the RMAs

London RMA Visit to Apsley House

While bitterly cold and grey outside, the interior of Apsley House was, in contrast, a riot of colour. Standing by the main entrance to Hyde Park, Apsley House is the former residence of Arthur Wesley, First Duke of Wellington, and victor of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

In recognition of his military success and elevated standing in society, the duke was awarded £700,000 by Parliament to build a new 'Waterloo Place'. Instead of embarking on a new building, however, in 1817 he submitted an anonymous bid to buy Apsley House for £40,000 from his older brother, Richard, who was on the verge of bankruptcy. Wellington then set about enlarging Apsley House, originally designed and built by Robert Adam in the 1770, to secure the fashionable apartments he needed to entertain in a manner befitting his new status.

While at Apsley, Wellington amassed a large collection of paintings, most of which had been presented to him by European rulers, grateful for his defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and the liberation of the continent.

London RMA members were entertained by an array of stories provided by a young guide who enthralled us with descriptions of the history, architecture and art collection to be found on this remarkable house. As photography is not permitted in the building, there are no pictures to record our group's visit.

Jenny Monk, London RMA

Chatsworth Christmas Display and Market: November

In 2018 it was raining on the day, but this year the rain curtailed some of the parking, which was a bonus for Carol and I, as we did not have to take a photo to remember where we had parked the car. We were slightly delayed by an accident on the M1, but we still managed a coffee and cake before our visit. No visit is complete unless there is morning coffee! We were joined by Malcolm and Christine (Brown) who had also been delayed, but they still managed time for coffee.

We made our way to the ticket gazebo and picked up our tickets for the 11:15 visit, but one of the staff told us to join the 11:30 line until one of our party piped up that we had 11:15 tickets, so we jumped the queue!

This year's theme was *'In a land far, far away...'* where we were following in the footsteps of explorers Phileas Fogg and Amelia Earhart. We went through rooms which were ornately decorated to represent a Nordic winter wonderland, through

blossom trees in Japan, to a baroque Spanish church. Each different display had the words for *Merry Christmas* in the appropriate language, the capital city of each land, and the amount of snow in December. We also had to find misplaced items which were not associated with each land such as Swiss cheese in Russia and a Dutch clog in Japan. As each object that looked out of place was in a Perspex case, it was quite easy to spot. Two of our party kept up the tradition of dressing up, and a photograph was taken whilst we were in the model hot-air balloon.

After a spot of lunch – a super soup – Carol and I went around the market while Christine and Malcolm explored the gardens. Retail therapy was enjoyed with us buying some presents for Christmas.

Jan Fowkes, Yorkshire RMA

Dublin Revisited

Twenty-five of us boarded the 8:00 Enterprise train to Dublin on a beautiful June day last year for our annual cross border visit with our friends in the Irish Retired Secondary Teachers' Association (RSTA).

Upon arrival in Dublin, we were warmly greeted by the RSTA welcoming party and off we headed for a much-needed coffee-stop in the nearby Harbour Master's complex where, over refreshments, we were given a minutely detailed timetable of the day's proposed events.

Thirty minutes later, we proceeded towards the Epic Centre, winner of last year's European Premier Tourist Attraction, dealing with the Irish diaspora before and after The Great Famine, which resulted in the death of a million people and the emigration of another million, mainly to America and Australia. At the entrance, we were issued with fake passports which were duly stamped in every room visited as a permanent record of our journey through the exhibition.

Off then to the 'Jeanie Johnston', a replica of a famine ship of the era. The original was so-named because the builder, a Scotsman, had a fondness for Robert Burns' poetry, and since many of fair Rabbie's 'amours' were called either Jean or Jeanie, it naturally followed that the ship should be named after them. Although many



passengers in other famine ships died due to disease and their weakened state, the proud boast of the Jeanie Johnston was that in her years as a famine ship, she never lost a single passenger or crew member. They all survived the perilous crossing to America – a remarkable achievement for that time.

Back to the Harbour Master's for, ironically, a splendid three-course lunch with accompanying wine, craic and banter. Then a short dander to the train station to bring to an end another memorable day with our southern colleagues. Here's to the next one!

Paddy Ormonde, Northern Ireland RMA

Message from the National Executive

On behalf of the National Executive, may I offer my best wishes to all members of the FRMA and all retired members of the NASUWT. I hope you are all well in these trying times and I hope we get back to normality soon.

Best wishes

John McGill
*(Chair of Salaries,
Chair of FRMA Liaison Committee)*

PENSIONS UPDATE - - - PENSIONS UPDATE - - - PENSIONS UPDATE

Teachers' Pension Payments during the Coronavirus Emergency

The NASUWT has engaged with the UK Governments to ensure that teachers' pensions continue to be paid during the coronavirus emergency without any disruption. The NASUWT has been assured by the UK Governments that pensions payroll processes are in place whilst staff are working from home and that, if necessary, additional resources will be provided by Governments to ensure that this continues to be the case.

However, if they need to, NASUWT retired members are strongly advised to contact their pensions administrator by e-mail or by the contact portal on the relevant Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) website. This is because postrooms or telephone contact centres may not be staffed, or may be only partially staffed.

Further information about the impact of the coronavirus emergency is available on the websites of each of the scheme administrators.

Negotiations on the McCloud remedy

McCloud is the name given to a UK-wide legal judgment that the transitional protections in reformed public service pension schemes are an unlawful form of age discrimination. The NASUWT is currently negotiating a remedy for the discrimination with the DfE, Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Department of Education. Negotiations are ongoing, and will be followed by changes to pensions legislation. The process is likely to continue through to 2021 or 2022.

If any retired members have pensionable service after 2015, the remedy is likely to include them being able to opt for pensionable service from this date onwards in another TPS, which may lead to

them receiving additional pension. Current pensions in payment cannot be reduced as a result of McCloud.

Updates on the McCloud negotiations are currently provided on the Teachers' Pensions websites. The NASUWT will also issue guidance on McCloud when the remedy is finally determined.

Obtaining pension assistance

The NASUWT offers an unparalleled service to all members and retired members of the Union. This includes providing assistance on issues which relate to members' periods of full membership, not least on pension issues.

However, before contacting the NASUWT, retired members, or surviving partners of NASUWT members, who have a query about their teachers' pension, should contact their pension scheme administrator in the first instance. The contact details are:

The Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme
Telephone: 028 7131 9000.

E-mail: teachers.pensions@education-ni.gov.uk.

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/topics/teaching-staff/pension-scheme>.

The Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme
Telephone: 01896 893000.

E-mail: via 'General Enquiries' on the SPPA website.

Website: www.sppa.gov.uk.

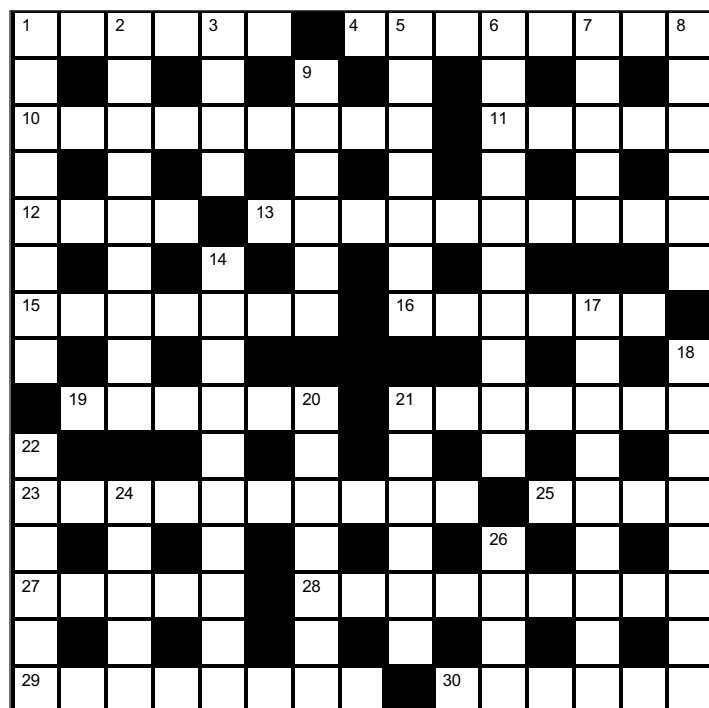
The England and Wales Teachers' Pension Scheme
E-mail: tpmail@teacherspensions.co.uk or via the My Pension Online portal.

Website: www.teacherspensions.co.uk.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD COMPETITION ISSUE 73

**A £35 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER FOR THE WINNER,
COURTESY OF NASUWT FEDERATION OF RETIRED MEMBERS' ASSOCIATIONS**

Crossword kindly provided by Colin Garside – Wirral RMA. SEND YOUR ENTRY TO: Sharon Childs, FORMAT Crossword, Hillscourt Education Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham B45 8RS. Closing date – Monday 21 September 2020.



The correct answers for Crossword 72 were:

R	E	C	O	V	E	R	Y		E	G	G	C	U	P		
I		A		I		E		U		A		O		A		
P	O	S	E	R		T	E	N	E	M	E	N	T	S		
S		T		G		S		I		E		G		S		
U	T	I	L	I	T	I	E	S		S	T	O	C	K		
P		L		N		N		O		E				E		
		M	I	N	I	M	A			N	O	T	A	B	L	Y
S		A		A						A		A		S		
P	A	N	A	C	H	E				A	G	N	A	T	E	
I				R				R		N		D		H		O
T	E	P	E	E				O	P	T	I	M	I	S	T	S
F		A		E		T		O		A		A		I		
I	N	C	E	P	T	I	O	N		T	I	L	E	R		
R		E		E		C		Y		C		T		I		
E	N	D	U	R	E			E	M	P	H	A	S	I	S	

Across

- 1 Regularly smash fairway to create one endless sand trap! (6)
- 4 Enjoying luxury, including your sweetheart (2,6)
- 10 What security-conscious Spooner has fitted to front door (6,3)
- 11 Number in wars with China (5)
- 12 Humour about the *Last Trump* (4)
- 13 To expel people takes time for such conduct (10)
- 15 Fabric woven from finest end of cloth (7)
- 16 The South gets more than enough, for instance (6)
- 19 Weapon carried around by *Private Cox*, evidently (6)
- 21 The colour of Crimean bananas (7)
- 23 Hoards supplies and lots of cash (10)
- 25 Smash and grab in a police raid (4)
- 27 Former leading man gets old by degrees (5)
- 28 Like the top team without a fixture (9)
- 29 It could not describe Henry VIII's judgment (8)
- 30 Indian tree hiding outlaw and any criminal (6)

Down

- 1 What frozen birds do and I do is fly badly (8)
- 2 Deliveries may be staggered (3,3,3)
- 3 French way to express regrets (4)
- 5 It's deadly with no end to tax and debts (7)
- 6 Rugby team includes gentler men like Daniel (4,6)
- 7 A weakness to hide love, say (5)
- 8 Controller of programmes is standoffish (6)
- 9 Take exception to a certain article (6)
- 14 Sounds like appropriate gift is a cheap ornament! (5-5)
- 17 Lie around, definitely relaxed (9)
- 18 Engine is not to be broken up for scrap (8)
- 20 I am enthralled by slim-making vitamin (7)
- 21 Like a cougher, perhaps (or a 'coffer', you might say) (6)
- 22 Transport sector going in convoy (6)
- 24 Gulf Arab in a second uprising (5)
- 26 He joins the Gunners but cannot go on the wing (4)